

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 963

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 2477

FOR NEA/IAI SMITH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR TOON'S INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR OF LABOR
PUBLICATION

1. AMBASSADOR TOON GRANTED INTERVIEW MARCH 8 TO ASHER
MANIV, EDITOR LABOR MONTHLY, "MIGVAN." MANIV HAD ASKED
FOR INTERVIEW ON AMERICAN BICENTENNIAL; QUESTIONS AT
INTERVIEW WERE ALMOST WHOLLY POLITICAL.

2. INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN "MIGVAN" APRIL ISSUE. ISRAELI
PAPERS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHING PORTIONS OF INTERVIEW, TAKEN
FROM "MIGVAN," PAST THREE DAYS. THOSE RELEVANT PORTIONS
REPEATED BELOW. FULL TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW BEING
FORWARDED BY MAIL. (NUMBERS IN PARENTHESES CORRESPOND TO
PARAGRAPH NUMBERING OF FULL TRANSCRIPT.)

3. (26) Q: WELL, HOW WOULD YOU--COULD YOU DEFINE THE
COMMON INTERESTS, OR IS THAT GOING TOO FAR?

4. (27) A: WE HAPPEN TO THINK THAT IT IS IN OUR NATIONAL
INTEREST THAT ISRAEL REMAIN FREE AND INDEPENDENT. NOW
THIS IS CLEARLY IN THE ISRAELI NATIONAL INTEREST AS WELL.
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AND I THINK THAT SUMS UP THE (INAUDIBLE).

5. (30) Q: (YOUR SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY) SAID THAT AMERICAN POLICY IS TO HELP THE FRIENDS OF AMERICA TO STAND ON THEIR OWN, ON THEIR OWN FEET. NOW THIS IS A GENERAL LINE, A GENERAL TREND, BUT THERE IS A VERY ELABORATE RELATIONSHIP IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AMERICA. WHAT IN YOUR VIEW, AMBASSADOR, IN THE NEAR FUTURE CAN BE DONE TO WIDEN THIS SORT OF RELATIONSHIP IN ALL SPHERES OF POLITICS, ECONOMY AND CULTURE AND SO FORTH.

6. (31) A: WELL, I THINK ONE THING THAT WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND --BOTH YOU THE ISRAELIS AND WE THE AMERICANS -- IN CARRYING FORWARD THIS RELATIONSHIP IS THAT WE WILL HAVE DIFFERING ATTITUDES TOWARD DIFFERENT PROBLEMS. OUR PERCEPTION OF EACH OTHER'S NATIONAL INTEREST WILL NOT ALWAYS CONINCIDE. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR BOTH OF -- BECUASE WE ARE MATURE PEOPLES, AND SENSIBLE PEOPLES--TO UNDERSTAND THAT THESE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION MAY TAKE PLACE, THAT WE SHOULD SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THESE DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT A SATISFACTORY MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. AND WE SHOULD NOT PERMIT THESE DIFFERENCES TO SERIOUSLY FRAY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WHICH I THINK, AS I SAID BEFORE, IS IN OUR GENUINE MUTUAL INTEREST. NOW IT HAS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST, SINCE I'VE BEEN THE AMBASSADOR HERE, THAT FROM TIME TO TIME YOU SEE CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES IN YOUR PRESS, AND OCCASIONALLY IN SPEECHES BY YOUR OFFICIALS, WHICH IN MY VIEW HAS BEEN UNFOUNDED, AND WHICH I THINK HAS RESULTED IN A CERTAIN UNPLEASANTNESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. I THINK IT'S TERRIBLY IMPORTANT FOR EACH SIDE TO RESPECT THE OTHER'S SENSITIVITIES AND TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW. THESE I THINK CAN BE RECONCILED IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES.

7. (32) Q: DO YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES OF INTERESTS OCCASIONALLY IT MIGHT COME TO A POSITION WHERE VITAL ISRAELI INTERESTS MIGHT HAVE TO BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE OF THE AMERICAN GLOBAL INTERESTS?

8. (33) A: I DON'T THINK SO. I THINK THAT YOU CAN RELY ON UNCLASSIFIED

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THE FACT THAT WE WILL ALWAYS BEHAVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT ISRAEL'S SECURITY WILL NOT BE JEOPARDIZED. THIS OF COURSE DEPENDS ON ONE'S INTERPRETATION, ONE'S ATTITUDE, AND IT MAY BE THAT WE MAY HAVE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW, AT LEAST AS FAR AS NUANCES ARE CONCERNED, AS TO WHAT REALLY CONSTITUTES YOUR SECURITY, YOUR REQUIREMENTS, AND WHAT REALLY MEETS THEM. BUT YOU CAN BE SURE THAT SINCE IT IS IN OUR OWN NATIONAL INTEREST THAT YOU REMAIN FREE AND INDEPENDENT, WE

WILL DO NOTHING THAT IN OUR VIEW AFFECTS YOUR SECURITY.

9. (34) Q: IT SO HAPPENED YESTERDAY I READ IN THE PAPER A SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY MADE IN AMERICA AMONGST INTELLECTUALS... ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF AMERICANS, OF AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS, TOWARDS ISRAEL, AND ALTHOUGH THEY WERE OVERWHELMINGLY FRIENDLY TO ISRAEL, STILL, WHEN ASKED, THEY DID NOT AGREE TO SEE ISRAEL AN ALLY WHICH AMERICA HAS A DUTY TO COME TO HER AID IF THERE'S ANY DANGER OF HER DESTRUCTION. DO YOU THINK THIS TO BE INDICATIVE OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION?

10. (35) A: NO, I DON'T THINK SO. I THINK YOU HAVE GENERAL SUPPORT IN THE CONGRESS AND AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR OUR ANNOUNCED POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL, WHICH IS TO DEFEND AND SUPPORT THE INDEPENDENCE AND THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL AS A STATE. NOW I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT THERE IS A CHANGE TAKING PLACE IN THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE--NOT NECESSARILY TOWARD ISRAEL BUT TOWARD THE WHOLE BUSINESS OF FOREIGN AID, TOWARD THE WHOLE BUSINESS OF FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT. THIS IS IN PART I THINK A HERITAGE OF OUR VIETNAM MISFORTUNE. IT'S IN PART THE RESULT OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES WE HAD DOMESTICALLY OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. THERE MAY BE OTHER REASONS FOR THIS TOO, BUT I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR YOU ISRAELIS TO UNDERSTAND

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FOR NEA/IAI SMITH

THAT THIS CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE. NOW OBVIOUSLY THIS IS GOING TO HAVE SOME IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN AID. I THINK, AS I'VE SAID PUBLICLY IN ISRAEL BEFORE, IT WOULD BE UNWISE FOR ISRAELIS TO RELY ON A LEVEL OF AID COMPARABLE TO THE ONE THIS YEAR OR LAST YEAR. THIS SIMPLY NOT GOING TO TAKE PLACE WHEN THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ATTITUDE, AS I SAID BEFORE, IS CHANGING. WE ARE THINKING MUCH MORE OF OUR SERIOUS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND TAKING CARE OF THEM AND LESS ABOUT FOREIGN AID THAT WE HAVE IN THE PAST. I THINK THIS IS SOMETHING THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE TO RECKON WITH IN SETTING THEIR COURSES OF ACTION IN THE FUTURE.

11. (38) Q: WHILE WE'RE ON THIS PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC AID, ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM--YOU COULD ALMOST SAY THE DEPENDENCE ON AMERICAN AID--IS WELL KNOWN. BUT BECAUSE OF HER PARTICULAR POSITION IN THIS AREA SHE FINDS HERSELF IN THE POSITION WHERE SHE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO PAY THE BILL. DO YOU THINK THAT THIS COULD IN ANY WAY ENDANGER NOT ONLY ISRAEL'S POSITION BUT THE GENERAL POSITION OF THE WEST IN THE GLOBAL CONFLICT?

12. (39) A: WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY PAYING THE BILL. I THINK THAT OUR POSITION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT YOU CAN'T UNCLASSIFIED

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REALLY PAY THE BILL FOR MODERN WEAPONS, THIS NOBODY EXPECTS YOU TO DO. AND I THINK YOU CAN ALWAYS RELY ON OUR HELP IN THAT AREA. WE DO FEEL--AND I THINK SOME OF YOUR PEOPLE SHARE THIS VIEW-- THAT YOU POSSIBLY COULD BE SELF-SUFFICIENT ECONOMICALLY, THAT IS THAT YOU WOULD NOT REQUIRE IN THE FUTURE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC SUPPORT AID AS IN THE PAST. IF YOU COULD DEVELOP YOUR ECONOMY IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU COULD BECOME "SELF-SUFFICIENT" IN THIS AREA, I THINK THIS WOULD BE GREATLY TO YOUR CREDIT. AND I THINK THIS WOULD EASE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. IT'S NOT EASY. WE RECOGNIZE THIS. BUT I THINK THAT SOME OF THE STEPS THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN OVER THE PAST YEAR ARE THE STEPS THAT WILL WORK YOU IN THIS DIRECTION. AND IT'S A HEALTHY DIRECTION FOR YOU TO GO.

13. (40) Q: NOW, LET'S GO TO ANOTHER SUBJECT. IT'S OF COURSE NATURAL FOR ISRAELIS TO HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES. DO YOU THINK THAT THERE ARE IN AMERICA TRACES OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY DANGER OF -- ANY TRACES THAT THEY MAY BE BECOMING A SERIOUS MENACE?

14. (41) A: I DON'T MYSELF KNOW OF ANY EVIDENCE THAT WOULD INDICATE THAT ANTI-SEMITISM WAS GROWING IN THE UNITED STATES.

I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SHOULD FEEL, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS BEING A LITTLE BIT STUBBORN, A BIT INFLEXIBLE ABOUT RESPONDING TO OUR OWN REQUIREMENTS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, THEN I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE THE BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ANTI-ISRAEL FEELING AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. THEREFORE, I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE AS FLEXIBLE AS YOUR OWN SECURITY REQUIREMENTS WILL PERMIT YOU TO BE IN WORKING OUT YOUR POLICIES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

15. (58) Q: SHALL I ASK JUST ANOTHER QUESTION, IF POSSIBLE? I UNDERSTAND THAT MANY PEOPLE IN AMERICA FEEL THAT THE SOVIET UNION DOESN'T PLAY THE RULES OF THE GAME, BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED IN ANGOLA AND IN AFRICA AND SO ON. AND WE KNOW WHEN A BIG COUNTRY PUMPS IN A LOT OF WEAPONRY TO AN ALLY IT'S NOT FREE ANY MORE TO DECIDE WHAT WILL BE GOING ON. ISN'T THERE A FEELING OF UNEASINESS ABOUT UNCLASSIFIED

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WHAT 'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST DUE TO THE FACT THAT THAT AMOUNT OF WEAPONRY WAS PUMPED IN BY THE SOVIET UNION, INTO THE MIDDLE EAST LATELY?

16. (59) A: LET ME SAY THIS ABOUT OUR ASSESSMENT AS TO SOVIET BEHAVIOR. I DON'T THINK ANY OF US WHO FEELS HE KNOWS A LITTLE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION FELT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ALWAYS PLAY BY THE RULES OF THE GAME, AS WE PERCEIVE THOSE RULES. WE HAVE FELT THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD TAKE A MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS VIEW OF PURSUING ITS OBJECTIVES, AND PARTICULARLY THAT IT WOULD AVOID PURSUING OBJECTIVES WHICH MIGHT POSSIBLY PUT THEM IN A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION WITH US. NOW WHAT HAPPENED IN ANGOLA BASICALLY HAPPENED SIMPLY BECAUSE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WAS FRUSTRATED AND INHIBITED BY THE FAILURE OF THE CONGRESS TO DO CERTAIN THINGS THAT WE ASKED THEM TO DO IN ORDER TO FACE UP TO THE SOVIET THREAT IN ANGOLA. WE FEEL THAT THIS WAS A VERY SERIOUS SETBACK IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. AND WE HOPE THAT IN TIME CONGRESS WILL RECOGNIZE THE ERROR OF ITS WAYS, AND WHEN WE FACE THE NEXT CRISIS PERHAPS WE CAN REACT IN A WAY WHICH WILL GIVE THE SOVIETS THE IDEA THAT THEY CAN GO JUST SO FAR AND NOT BEYOND THAT. NOW WITH REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST, FRANKLY WE'RE ALWAYS CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT MAY HAPPEN IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. THE SITUATION AT THE PRESENT TIME IS POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE. WE HOPE THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL TAKE A MORE HELPFUL VIEW IN WORKING OUT WITH US THE COOPERATIVE POLICIES WHICH MIGHT PERHAPS BRING ABOUT PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. BUT WHETHER THEY WILL OR NOT IS ANYBODY'S GUESS. I'M NOT TERRIBLY OPTIMISTIC.

17. (60) Q: AND WITHOUT THAT, IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF DOING ANYTHING

WITHOUT SOVIET COOPRATION?

18. (61) A: I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY REAL CHANCE OF BRINGING
ABOUT A JUST AND LASTING PEACE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD
WITHOUT SOVIET COOPERATION. I THINK THERE IS SOME CHANCE OF,
AS I PUT IT, KEEPING THE LID ON , MAKING SURE THAT HOSTILITIES
DON'T BREAK OUT, WITH OR WITHOUT SOVIET COOPERATION. I THINK
THAT'S ALL WE CAN HOPE FOR IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
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